1: Gorer J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

education, and who do not see the desirable goal of full status approaching constantly nearer.

Very often shortly after their emancipation—that is round about the age of five or six—children go through a stage of excessive bashfulness and timidity. Adult Lepchas think this silly and rather funny, and, with their habitual insensitiveness to differences of character, are liable to tease such shy children—to imitate them or make remarks about them in front of their faces. This bashfulness passes off gradually; boys generally get rid of it earlier; with girls it may last till marriage.

Between about the ages of five and twelve little girls spend much more time with their parents than little boys. Both boys and girls are with their elders nearly all the time that there is work to be done in the fields, but in the evenings and on holidays the boys are usually freer; the girls are wanted to help their mothers with the cooking and especially to mind and hold the younger siblings. The boys, especially if they have no sisters, may be wanted for the same work, but most of them have more liberty. A few of the girls —the tomboys—like to get away to play with the other children, but adults try to discourage this as a reputation for neglecting her work to go and play would tell against the girl's chances of marriage. The same holds good, but within somewhat wider limits, for boys; a boy who spent too much time amusing himself instead of working for the household would get a reputation for laziness, which would make him an undesirable groom.

The choice of companionship for playmates is usually extremely limited; companionship is chiefly based on approximately equal age, though, if there is a choice, relations or near neighbours are usually preferred. Boys usually work and play in groups of two or three; but these groups do not appear to be constant and depend more than anything on the children being at leisure, or engaged in the same work, simultaneously.

Lepcha children have no toys, nor is there any sort of organised game. To a great extent children play by themselves; in the house they will make piles of corn cobs or amuse themselves by arranging grains in patterns (a characteristic trait of Lepcha children is a great feeling for tidiness and neatness, and a predilection for straight lines; anything which can be folded straight or arranged in lines is so done with remarkable trueness; curves do not come into childish patterns, nor, for that matter into adult construction or weaving); out of doors they will play catch with suitable flowers

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

Karma and his wife continued to live with Gongyop for several more years; but on the death of the former's step-father they went to live with his mother. His wife died in 1932, and his mother the following year. He soon married again, and his second wife bore him two children, the first of which died shortly after birth. Six months after the birth of the second child his wife died; and it is her mother who at present keeps house for him. Last year he was again betrothed and hopes to be married next year. In the meantime his future bride already has a baby seven months old. Karma believes in "Bloomsbury" morals; for he lived with his first wife for six years before he troubled to marry her; and when he finally decided to regularise his position he even went to the trouble of carrying out all the preliminary formalities, including a formal betrothal. He never thought it necessary to be faithful to any of his wives, and believes he is the father of at least two bastards. Of all our informants he was the most forthcoming and particularly enjoyed talking about himself. He was much more arrogant than the average Lepcha, and would probably have fitted better into a somewhat more forceful society. Had the army been open to him as a profession he would quickly have become a non-commissioned officer; for above all things he liked to order others about. For this reason he enjoys his post of Karbari, and I imagine will be far less happy when he has to obey orders rather than give them himself. The others think he is proud and a boaster, but say that he always speaks the truth. He is the type that in an European culture would be found standing at the street corner, hands in pockets, with a cigarette drooping from his lips. He would quickly degenerate if he ever lived in a town, and might easily take to a life of crime. I never liked him very much, but of all the Lingtem people he was easily the most useful.

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The Hlaribu does not live in Lingtem; but since he is an active member of the local monastery and appears in many

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

of the other stories, I have decided to include him: also he is the only artist in the district. Sixty-six years of age, he was bow-legged and almost a dwarf, and had a deep incised scar running the length of his forehead. He had come by this in the days of his youth, having fallen down one night on his way home from a party. He looked like a benevolent gnome. The word Hlaribu, which is Tibetan, really means a "maker of gods, or images," but is in general use for all people who are engaged in any sort of artistic work, from wood-carving to painting pictures on cloth. When the Hlaribu was about fourteen he was helping to repair the Talung monastery. At that time he was still learning to become a Lama; and when his teacher saw his work he advised him to become an artist. Shortly after this he went to the big monastery at Phensang, which is famous in Sikkim for the artistic work of its monks. He stayed there for nine years. When he set off he took with him a load of *chi*, a ceremonial scarf, and one rupee; these he laid at the feet of his teacher. On finishing his course he gave him twenty rupees, a pig, and a big copper vessel. The Hlaribu does not believe there is such a thing as individual skill in painting. He says that having completed the course he was as good as, and neither better nor worse than anyone else. Before he had any lessons he used to amuse himself by drawing birds and men on odd scraps of paper. He has now no preference with regard to the subjects he paints and only works to order, never for his own pleasure or amusement; he has not even troubled to decorate his own house.

When he first started to learn he was made to draw on a wooden board, which was covered with a thick layer of earth, oiled and powdered. The actual drawing was done with a wooden stylo, and being only for practice, was erased as soon as finished. He was first made to copy the heads of gods. After five or six days he became proficient at this, and was then made to copy cross-legged figures of naked gods. This took a further ten days. The next stage was to draw clothed figures, which, owing to their drapery, he found much more

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

difficult. Now came the figure of the god Chumden-De. This is always the first god that a pupil learns to draw; not because it is considered particularly easy, but because it was the first to be incarnated. His drawing of Chumden-De was coloured, but there is no formal instruction in painting, since it consists in merely filling in spaces with solid colour, no attempt being made to suggest the play of light and shade. During the early stage he was never allowed to draw without a copy, but by the time he finished he had made so many drawings of the various members of the Lamaist pantheon that he was able to draw them from memory without a mistake. His course finished with the painting of a picture known as Jimbong-Ngernga, a complicated group of twenty-five gods, one of which had no less than sixteen hands and legs, not to mention its eight ungainly heads. This, he said, was very difficult, and he has now forgotten how to draw it. During his nine years at Phensang the Hlaribu learnt the details of several hundred gods: he can no longer remember all of these, but by reference to a book is still able to produce any particular one for which he may be asked. He might almost be described as an "Academician" in outlook; for he does not believe in introducing any sort of individuality into his pictures, and thinks it best to stick to the rules. He does not admit the possibility of difference in two pictures of the same subject if painted by two different artists: since the subject is the same one cannot be better than the other. He thinks, however, that paintings made in Tibet are better than those from Sikkim, since the tradition came originally from the former country. In Tibet it is usual for an artist to devote his whole life to the craft, whereas here in Sikkim it is merely a side line. In addition to making pictures the Hlaribu was also taught to do wood-carving, but not to make images, which are usually imported from either Tibet or Bhutan. Carving is almost entirely confined to decorating the mouldings of windows and doors. This is afterwards picked out in colour, usually in a combination of red, blue, and green. The colours are generally crude and violently contrasted,

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

but the general effect in the gloomy rooms of a semi-darkened monastery is often not unpleasing.

Apart from its actual built-in decoration every monastery has a few hanging wall-pictures, or *Thang-Ka* as they are called. These are generally painted on canvas or cotton, which is first prepared by stretching it while damp over a wooden frame, from which it is detached when completed. The mounted Tibetan painting generally has a tricoloured silk border, usually of red, yellow and blue. According to Waddell this "is alleged to represent the spectrum colours of the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. The outer border of blue is broader than the others, and broadest at its lowest border, where it is usually divided by a vertical patch of brocade embroidered with the dragons of the sky. A veil is invariably added as a protection against the grimy smoke of incense, lamps and dust. The veil is of flimsy silk, often adorned with sacred symbols, and it is hooked up when the picture is exhibited." There were several such pictures in our room at Lingtem, but all were of very inferior quality, and in no way to be compared with some of the really beautiful works of art one often sees in Tibetan monasteries.

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I started this chapter with an account of the local Church's leader, and it seems fitting to close it with a few details about the head of the civil administration. Chala Mandal is fifty-nine, but like most Lepchas does not look his age, and would never believe that he was nearly twenty years my senior. He has been ill for several weeks, and does not often leave his house. It was divined that his trouble comes from Subdok Mung. It appears that the Mandal's first wife was a Mun, and that when she died her body, instead of being buried, was cremated, a rite that is usually accorded only to members of the Church. The burial ceremonies were carried out by Lamas, no Mun, which was not in accordance with custom, being present. For this reason her soul was angry, and

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

ox had been already slaughtered. A number of people were drinking in the kitchen and in the altar-room next door Tafoor and another Lama were chanting, accompanying themselves with cymbals and drums. The altar was filled with *tormas* of every size and description, some of them embellished with stylised floral designs in coloured butter.* In front of the group of *tormas* was a row of lamps, about a dozen in number. These had already been lighted and formed the sole illumination of the room. On the ground in front of the Lamas was an object known as *Nak-po-Gosum*, "the black (magical) three-headed one." This was a very elaborate figure of a three-headed hermaphrodite adorned with what looked like bits of stick, brambles and feathers. At the time there was no opportunity to examine it carefully in the semi-darkened room, but since it appeared to be of unusual interest I later got Tafoor to come and make one for me, and its details are given below. The figure itself was about one foot high, but its genitalia, which were prominently displayed, were life-sized. The male organ was shown protruding from the female, with the pudenda hanging below. Some of the blood of the slaughtered ox had been sprinkled over the figure, parts of which had been previously coloured.

While the Lamas continued their chanting the patient remained in the kitchen, where the Mun Gongyop was doing some ceremony, with the head and legs of the ox laid out in front of him. It seemed to consist in the constant repetition of the names of various gods and demons. As soon as this was

* The *torma*, or "holy food," which is used in every Lamaist ceremony, is "a high, conical cake of dough, butter and sugar, variously coloured." In Lingtem they were usually made of plain millet paste. Mrs. de Beauvoir Stocks states that the Lepchas "exhibit *tormas* as phallic offerings." I have never come across this suggestion before and believe it to be quite unfounded. I was told in Tibet that the *torma* was originally made in the form of an image of the god to which it was intended as an offering. As ritual became more complicated so the numbers of *tormas* required increased in number (some ceremonies require several hundred), and in this way, perhaps as some form of labour-saving device, the original figure became stylised into its present conical form. But in any case the Lepcha has no use for symbolism. When he wishes to suggest the human genitalia he represents it as it is: it would never occur to him to do otherwise.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

775 fresh healthy complexion. I could hardly believe my eyes; but such is the nature of faith.

THE GO-SUM AND ITS MYTHOLOGY

THE FIGURE

778 The figure of the Go-sum is first built up roughly on a base of coarse grass and fastened to a small plank by means of a stick, on which it is impaled. The trimmings and anatomical details are added later, and are usually made of dough in order to make for easier working.

The central head, which is somewhat larger than the others, is that of a bull; that on the right a tiger; and the one on the left is a pig. All three are shown with open grinning mouths. In addition to the genital organs, as already described, the figure has female breasts and a large stylised
● [531] navel, the design of which represents a tortoise holding a magic square. This is said to represent the world. The Go-sum is also provided with a tail in the form of a snake, which lies in coils behind it. Behind the bull's head a single kite's feather is stuck, and the figure is decorated down both its sides with ordinary chickens' feathers. The latter have no significance, and it is said that "the creature was merely born like that." In the palm of each hand is a miniature *Torma*, and another is placed on top of the central head. Each of these is adorned with a dab of butter, which represents clothing and jewels. There is a similar dab on the end of the penis, put there to represent semen. Other dabs round the neck and arms are representative of necklaces and bracelets. On the back of the figure is a small cloth bag filled with grain. This is its food.

782 The ceremony demands the sacrifice of an ox. Since a Lama may not himself take life this is done by a Mun; but the Lama takes some of the blood and sprinkles it over the figure.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

one of the demons of quarrels. To get rid of Tumsi a paper must be prepared with its picture stamped upon it. This is to be surrounded by thirteen crossed sticks, representing arrows, since this Mung also causes wars.

After dreaming of a red ox the patient will sweat profusely, and may also have pain in the legs. She should not keep pigs; nor should she buy any blue-coloured cloth. She must buy neither goat nor ox; nor must she sit near a big tree. The flesh of red oxen must be eschewed.

There is also trouble from Hlamin Jimen, who is a god when pleased and a demon when angry. This has imprisoned the patient's soul and put a fence round it, so that for the time being it is not free to wander. The soul is at present living in some place that is neither heaven nor earth, but is between the two. This trouble has come from some other person's enmity, and was probably caused by domestic animals straying into that person's fields and damaging the crops. A death of some sort is indicated; but it will not necessarily be the patient herself. The remedy for this particular difficulty is the carrying out of the *Deut Shagyur Kyok* ceremony. The patient also appears to be restless and cannot bear the smell of high meat; but this can be easily put right by means of the *Chimbu Klong* ceremony.

It is advisable also to carry out the *Dembu Sun* ceremony as soon as possible or the patient may become seriously ill. A good harvest is indicated and the family will be prosperous.

A cause of minor trouble is the antagonism existing between the "year-signs" of husband and wife. For this reason there is, for instance, trouble from Chumen Mung and Leut Dusain. Matsong Rum and Leut Sabdong may also cause some worry. The patient is likely to dream of a broken-down house and a stream: also she may suffer from vomiting. She should not use black thread; neither should she wear any black clothing or purchase anything black. She should take no food offered by people who live at a distance, even though they be her relatives. It is advisable to arrange for Lamas to read the *Tuncheu* as soon as

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

who are going in an inauspicious direction, or who are forced [751]
to travel at an inauspicious time. *Palkyet-Sung* is an amulet of [777]
universal purpose and worn to increase one's general luck; while *Gyal-Sung* is a charm for warding off the evil influences of a special class of demons which are both inimical and useful to human beings, in proportion to the degree in which they are either propitiated or disregarded. These demons, which are believed to be the spirits of perverted Lamas, are said to cause nightmares, also diseases of the brain and nervous system. *Tshon-Sung* are "weapon-warders" and are usually worn only by warriors when going into battle. They are not therefore much used in Sikkim.

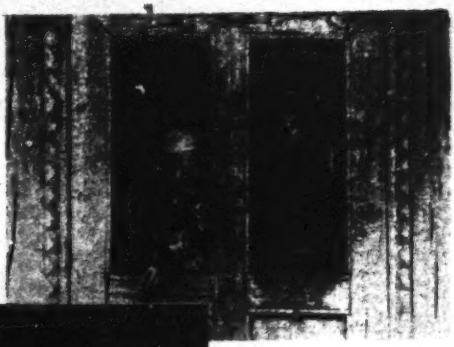
Amulets are usually made from a square piece of Sikkimese Daphne-bark (*Edgeworthia Gardneri*) paper. This is folded into a square and decorated with coloured thread, the inside being generally printed with various spells, usually the names of deities whose help it is wished to invoke. They are often Tibetan translations of Sanskrit spells. Other charms are inscribed with sacred letters and diagrams copied out of the Tibetan Tantric scriptures, and decorated on the outside with a row of figures representing the Lama's sceptre, together with a flame. The sacred diagram is generally placed in the centre of a circle round which are arranged a series [531] ●
of symbolic letters. These are usually in the form of either an eight-petalled lotus, a double triangle, or a pentagon.

The efficacy of these charms is firmly believed in by the illiterate Lepcha, but their exact allegorical meaning is understood only by Lamas; and even then only by few. But since openly to disbelieve in their power would amount almost to heresy, even indifferent believers accept and use them.

The *Sipaha*, however, is always believed in, and is generally made by an artist. It consists of a set of astrological diagrams together with invocations to the gods of wisdom and astrology, the commandments of Manjusri, and instructions to the spirits ruling over the elements, commanding them to cast no evil eye on the wearer of the charm.

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

291
142
[531
34]



Happy family.

285

Lepcha girl.

[482
854]

Tafoor's two daughters.

[301
415]

Baby, having overeaten at luncheon.

[facing p.210]

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

142
291

Karma.

142
291
531
415
824

Culture contact. A Lepcha youth on return from two years in Gangtok. The object against the right doorpost is a bamboo water-container.

[facing p.242]